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SUCCESS STORY

Training Offers Youths Alternatives to Cattle Raiding



Sudanese youth are building early warning posts, like this one in Thon, Jonglei State.

As part of a USAID/OTI-funded program, 90 youths took part in vocational training courses, during which they helped construct early warning monitoring posts in the Greater Upper Nile region.

June 2008 – In an effort to enhance security in the Greater Upper Nile region, USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) is providing assistance to establish six early warning monitoring posts where Dinka, Nuer, Jikany, and Murle tribal borders meet and violent clashes often occur.

Cattle raiding is an age-old tradition among the pastoralist groups of the Greater Upper Nile; however, the use of automatic weapons is a new development. During Sudan's north-south civil war, a culture of violence and lawlessness spread in the absence of a functioning government, and the region saw a proliferation of small arms. Instead of attending school, youths were armed by tribal and militia leaders and trained in methods of warfare. More than three years since the

signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, endemic insecurity continues to deny the region's citizens the peace benefits that are now reaching other parts of southern Sudan.

Earlier this year, USAID/OTI's implementing partner, Pact, invited 90 youths to assist with the construction of the six early warning posts. The young people have received a three-month, on-the-job training course in the masonry, carpentry, and roofing trades. At each site, 15 trainees are using their newly acquired technical skills to construct a storeroom, a washroom, and a kitchen, as well as the foundation for a prefabricated office building. The youths have gained valuable skills that will allow them to pursue lawful employment. As the buildings are completed, each group is given one of the environmentally friendly brick-making machines used during construction. The gift is an inducement to keep them working together and seeking additional jobs. As the projects have progressed, the facilitators have also sought to gain the youths' acceptance of the early warning posts. Regular meetings have addressed police-youth relations and explored the role that youth can play in enhancing community security.

Once completed, each community will select representatives to staff the posts and contact the local government when banditry or conflict occur or seem imminent. USAID/OTI support aims to strengthen the capacity of communities to positively affect security in conjunction with effective and legitimate security forces deployed by the government.